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ZNY CCCCC ZZH (CCY ADX 5D526DVSC0327)  
R 281439Z APR 09 ZDS  
FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7929  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHISINAU 000337

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CHANGED DECL)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/28/2019

TAGS: PGOV PHUM KDEM MD

SUBJECT: POST-ELECTION HUMAN RIGHTS  
CONCERNS ABOUT ARRESTS AND ABUSE

Classified by CDA: KEIDERLING for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Numerous reports have documented human rights concerns about arrests in connection with the violent April 7 demonstrations and beatings of those detained. The Ministry of Interior confirmed 317 arrests in connection with this demonstration, and reported on April 22 that all but eleven had been released. As promised by the Prime Minister, embassy officers were given qualified access to the prisons, and visited on April 15. A U.N. human rights advisor interviewed forty of the prisoners and confirmed that the majority of those interviewed showed evidence of harsh treatment. Those still in prison include several highly politicized cases, such as those of Sergei Mocanu and Gabriel Stati. A Deputy Minister of Interior noted that 200 policemen were wounded in the April 7 violence; a week later, 42 of these were either still hospitalized or unable to return to work. Three of the demonstrators beaten by police have died of their injuries. End Summary.

Human Rights Concerns about Detained  
Demonstrators

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¶2. (C) Following the violent April 7 demonstration, arrests began overnight and continued for the next few days. A range of international bodies, local human rights NGOs and political parties issued reports expressing concerns about the treatment of the detainees. Chisinau City Hall, headed by Mayor and Liberal Party leader Dorin Chirtoaca took the lead in putting out a series of reports with graphic photos showing evidence of bruises and several broken bones. Rumors and exaggerated numbers circulated on blogs and social networking sites suggesting that thousands were arrested and missing, and an atmosphere of fear took over. Focus on the elections results had been replaced by human rights concerns.

MoI Confirms 317 Arrests, All but Eleven  
Released

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¶13. (C) In an April 16 meeting with RSO, an advisor to the Minister of Interior, Serghiu Golovaci, reported that the opposition was circulating allegations about numbers of arrestees that were far too high. He confirmed that the actual number arrested as a result of the April 7 violence was 317. As of April 22, Golovaci confirmed that all of those administratively detained were already released, and that all but eleven of the more serious criminal offenders had been released.

¶14. (C) Golovaci showed RSO five collated notebooks of color photographs taken from surveillance cameras (fixed) and officers on the street. These officers were clearly imbedded in the crowd; some photos of rock throwers were taken from ten feet away (or less) and were of excellent quality. Golovaci conceded that mistakes were made, and estimated that perhaps ten to twenty of the arrestees were erroneously arrested. Golovaci was very upset about mass media and opposition characterizations of MOI actions, and stated that the accusations against the MOI were overblown.

¶15. (C) In a separate meeting with the Deputy Minister of Interior, Ghenadi Cosovan, he reported that 200 of his men were injured. As of April 15,

forty-two of the injured police were either still hospitalized or not yet able to return to work, and by April 23, seventeen were still unable to work, according to Cosovan.

#### Embassy Officers Given Prison Access

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¶16. (C) As promised by Prime Minister Greceanii in her April 14 meeting with the Ambassador, Embassy officers were given access to the detainees in two facilities. RSO and Resident Legal Advisor (RLA) interviewed eight individuals detained in connection with the protests, but had only limited control of the selection of the detainees. Of these, one indicated that he had been roughed up "a little bit." The others did not show physical signs of obvious abuse, though one looked like he might have had traces of bruises near one of his eyes.

¶17. (C) The first prisoner interviewed was former presidential advisor Sergei Mocanu, who said that he was taken off the street by people with automatic guns. Initially he did not know if they were criminals kidnapping him or police arresting him. He denied physical abuse, but reported psychological pressure and at one point began crying. He said that he heard sounds of people being abused upstairs. His large cell included personal effects and water bottles. He reported being denied a family visit.

#### Report by U.N. Human Rights Advisor

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¶18. (C) U.N. Human Rights Advisor Edwin

Berry visited penitentiary 13 (where prisoners were transferred to after their sentencing). The overwhelming majority of detainees were between 18 and 23 years of age, with no prior history of breaking the law, Berry reported. He interviewed 40 of the prisoners, and said that the majority of those interviewed showed evidence of harsh treatment. They described beatings administered through clubs, water bottles, fists and feet. They reported that they were not only beaten but also witnessed others being beaten.

Consular Officer Visits Amcit

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¶ 19. (C) After initially being stonewalled by the General Prosecutor's Office, our consular officer was granted access to American citizen Jonathan Netanyahu on the evening of April 16. He had a bruise on his left arm from being hit eight days earlier with a baton. He also claimed verbal and psychological abuse, as he had been threatened by police that he would be shot if he did not obey them.

¶ 10. (C) During the consular visit a prisoner in a neighboring cell yelled out that his name was Ion Butmalai and that he was number 8 on the electoral list of Vlad Filat's opposition Liberal Democratic Party (a high enough position on the electoral list to be elected to the new parliament). He said that he had been arrested nine days earlier, held at the police station and beaten daily for eight days until he was transferred to penitentiary number 13.

Three Deaths from Police Excess

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¶ 11. (SBU) Press and the Chisinau Mayor reported three fatalities as a result of police brutality. These were Valeriu Boboc, Ion Tabuleac, and Eugen Tapu. The

body of 23-year old Boboc was reported found dead in the national square, apparently killed as a result of police action overnight April 7-8. Boboc's family's lawyer noted that the victim's body was covered in bruises. The body of Ion Tibuleac had internal hemorrhage, fractured ribs, a fractured leg, and multiple wounds on the surface of his body. He too died on the night of April 7 in Chisinau. The third body, that of Eugen Tapu, was returned to his parents in Soroca on April 17, but apparently had died the night of April 7.

¶ 12. (C) Before dawn on April 8 a senior FSN investigating a security incident spoke with a policeman he had known for many years. That officer reported that the police had "kicked the protestors' asses." He confided that his men had "worked one guy over ... too much" and had gotten "a little out of control." When asked "did he die?" the officer trailed off in his answer, leading us to believe that the subject had been killed. (Note: It may be that this was one of the bodies found in the central square. End note.)

## Several Detainees Still in Custody

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¶13. (C) The Ministry of Interior confirmed for the Embassy that eleven individuals are still being held in connection with the April 7 demonstrations. The vast majority of those detained in connection with the demonstration have been released, according to the Ministry. Of those still being held, several are high-profile political cases. Those still in custody include Gabriel Stati and his security officer Aurel Marinescu, Sergei Mocanu, Anatol Matasaru, and AMCIT Jonathan Netanyahu who was released and rearrested.

¶14. (C) Gabriel Stati is the son of Moldovan billionaire Anatol Stati, owner of the oil firm ASCOM group and the richest family in Moldova. The younger Stati is also the son-in-law of Dumitru Diacov, head of the Democratic Party (which failed to win seats in Parliament), having married Diacov's older daughter Natalia some ten years ago. Enmity between the Stati and Voronin families has never been a secret.

¶15. (C) Sergei Mocanu was one of the co-founders of the Popular Front in the late 1980's. In 2004 Mocanu was appointed Voronin's presidential advisor in charge of relations with Romania, but in June 2007 was dismissed. Confrontation with Voronin emerged some months later when Mocanu founded his People's Action Movement, which the Ministry of Justice refused to register. This movement supported the idea of abandoning the search for a Transnistrian settlement, and focusing on European integration only. Voronin's enmity towards Mocanu is likely related to the latter's position on Romanian politics. Mocanu's two sons were arrested in 2008, and sought refuge in the Romanian embassy. Though instigating the April 7 violence was the reason cited for Mocanu's arrest, this charge must be viewed in light of his history with President Voronin.

¶16. (C) Also still in custody is Anatol Matasaru. He first emerged on our radar screen as the individual who donned a pig suit during the protest in front of the Prosecutor General's Office on January 29, 2009. The small peaceful protest of under a dozen people was attacked by six masked individuals with sticks and degenerated into a melee. When police did not

intervene, it was assumed that government officials had instigated the incident, but this assumption remains unconfirmed. Matasaru once again donned the pig suit for the April 7 protest and police alleged he was throwing rocks.

¶17. (C) AMCIT Jonathan Netanyahu is in custody again. He was arrested initially after the turmoil and sentenced to 15 days. He was released on Thursday, April 23 and arrested again on Friday, April 24 for 30 days and placed in penitentiary 13. The prosecutor must decide over the next 30 days whether to prosecute Netanyahu.

Netanyahu's legal counsel informed Embassy staff that the police found Netanyahu's fingerprints on bottles with bomb materials. Police maintained that the bottles and bomb materials were in Netanyahu's apartment.

Comment

18. (C) Events moved rapidly after Moldova's April 5 elections. What began as peaceful post-electoral demonstrations degenerated into rock-throwing violence. The police were given orders not to shoot and were unable to contain the crowd during the April 7 daytime violence. As demonstrators and some journalists were detained and some beaten, if the reports are correct, the public debate shifted from the election results to human rights concerns. These events, plus the reports of three deaths, damaged Moldova's image domestically and internationally. With the bulk of the detainees already released, the most obvious abuses appear to have ceased. The Constitutional Court has now certified the election results, and the new Parliament will convene and elect a president. However, the nation's bruises have not yet healed. So far, there is little sign that the GOM is interested in pursuing national reconciliation to heal the rifts caused between government and opposition supporters.

KEIDERLING